

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:59
ANSWERED ON:25.07.2005
SPURIOUS BT. COTTON
Acharia Shri Basudeb

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item appearing in 'Business Standard' on July 2, 2005 regarding illegal sale of spurious Bt. Cotton seeds being in the country;
- (b) if so, the details in this regard;
- (c) whether the attention of the Government has also been drawn towards the suffering caused to the farmers due to poor production of cotton from such spurious Bt. Cotton seeds; and
- (d) if so, the action taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA)

(a)to(d): There have been certain reports of production and supply of spurious Bt. Cotton seeds in some states particularly, in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. The Government of India has advised in 2004 to all the Bt. Cotton growing States to take necessary punitive action against the producers and venders of illegal Bt. Cotton seeds under the provisions of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and Seed (Control) Order, 1983. Department has again instructed Bt. Cotton growing States in 2005 reiterating its earlier stand and requested to create awareness amongst the farmers through awareness campaign regarding the potential risks associated with illegal Bt. Cotton seeds.

The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) have also advised all the Bt. Cotton growing States from time to time punitive action against producers, suppliers and venders of spurious Bt. Cotton seeds under the provision of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and Seed Legislations. Besides, the Central Institute for Cotton Research, Nagpur has been notified as referral lab for detecting the presence/absence of Bt. Gene.

As per information made available by the Department of Seed Certification, Tamil Nadu, a laboratory has been established in the Directorate of Seed Certification, Coimbatore to test cotton seed to analyze whether it contains illegal Bt. Gene. It has been intimated by the Government of Punjab, where Bt. Cotton varieties have been approved for cultivation during Kharif-2005, that they have issued strict instructions to all field functionaries to check and stop sale of any spurious seeds. They have also undertaken massive campaigns for educating farmers on the issue. The Government of Gujarat has intimated that they are taking all precautionary steps through its quality control mechanism to check the sale of spurious Bt. Cotton seeds, which includes directives to all District Collectors and a massive awareness programme for the farming community. As on date 22 Bt. Cotton hybrids of four Seeds Companies are commercially released by the GEAC and are available to the farmers in the country.